COUNCIL ON
ALBERTA TEACHING STANDARDS

Year End Report

September, 1988

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Introduction

The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards had monthly meetings throughout the period of August 1987 through August 1988. During that time the Council focused attention on the following areas: practice review process, development of a recommendation regarding teachers who incur criminal convictions, development of a proposal for recognizing excellent teachers, and a study of issues and topics in teacher preparation and teacher evaluation. As a result, a number of initiatives were undertaken in each of these areas.

Practice Review

During the period August 1987 to June 1988, the Council focused on implementing the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation by conducting orientation sessions with Regional Offices of Education, re-examining procedures and by ensuring that lists of potential members of panels and committees were prepared for review and approval by the Minister.

By participating in the orientation sessions, Council members assisted in the development of a detailed outline of procedures that would guide investigators in their task. A document outlining procedures for conducting inquiries and investigations related to practice reviews is nearing completion and should be presented to the Council for approval in the fall of 1988.

Throughout this period the Council continued to refine the Practice Review of Teachers Procedures. As orientation sessions were held with various interest groups additional questions were raised conceming various aspects of the Procedures. As a result, a close examination was made of the Procedures and appropriate changes were made where necessary.

During the period August 1987 - June 1988, considerable work was done to prepare for the implementation of the new School Act. Since the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation derives much of its authority from the School Act, the Council examined those elements of the Regulation which are closely related to elements within the new School Act to ensure congruency. Some of this work will be carried forward in the fall of 1988 and will be completed prior to implementation of the new School Act.

During the fall of 1987, the Alberta Teachers' Association solicited a list of names of its members who would be willing to serve on practice review panels or committees.

Superintendents whose teachers were nominated for this purpose were contacted to confirm that release time would be provided if required to allow a teacher to participate. Once confirmation was received, this list was forwarded to the Minister for approval.

At the same time a list of public nominees was also prepared. Nominations received through advertisements in major daily and weekly newspapers throughout the province were screened and a list was forwarded to the Minister for approval. The approved list of public nominees along with the approved list of teacher nominees was then forwarded to the Council for information.

Late in the Spring of 1988 a complaint was made regarding the competence of a teacher. This complaint led to a preliminary inquiry being requested by the Registrar for Alberta Education according to procedures outlined in the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation. This preliminary inquiry will be completed in the Fall of 1988. This complaint also necessitated the selection of a Complainant Appeal Committee and alternate by the Competency Review Panel Selection Committee of COATS.

Teachers Who Incur a Criminal Conviction

The Council on Alberta Teaching Standards was asked to address the problem of a procedure for acting on cases where a teacher incurs a criminal conviction but is not subject to the disciplinary bylaws of the Alberta Teachers' Association. These circumstances occur when a teacher is no longer a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association or when a teacher is. applying for initial certification. The Council studied the issues surrounding such circumstances and provided a recommendation to the Minister. The Minister requested the views of particular stakeholder groups on the proposal prepared by the Council. These groups included the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Trustees' Association, the Universities' Co-ordinating Council, the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents and the Alberta Federation of Home and School Associations.

The Council will review its recommendation in light of responses from these groups and await the Minister's decision on the proposed process.

Teacher Excellence

In June 1987, the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards forwarded a proposal to the Minister outlining a provincial program to recognize teacher excellence. The Minister agreed with the proposal in principle but wished to have the proposal reviewed by all the major stakeholder groups before making a decision to implement the program. A copy of the proposal was forwarded to each of the following groups:

- the Alberta Teachers' Association;
- the Alberta School Trustees' Association;
- the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents;
- The Faculties of Education at the University of Alberta, University of Calgary and University of Lethbridge; and
- the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges.

The proposal outlined a rationale for the program, eligibility requirements, criteria for selection, nomination process and procedures and a sample nomination package.
The responses from the various interest groups lead to a number of revisions being made to the proposal. The revised proposal outline was forwarded to the Minister and a decision regarding implementation is expected in the Fall of 1988.

Teacher Preparation
The Teacher Preparation Subcommittee of COATS met on several occasions from October 1987 through June 1988. Three basic issues related to teacher preparation were under study,

1. Teacher preparation in private colleges

2. Teacher preparation and the continuing need for the Early Childhood Services Diploma
3. Teacher preparation, a conceptual framework

1. Teacher Preparation in Private Colleges

In October of 1987, a subcommittee of the Council met to consider a response to an enquiry made by King's College which proposed to offer a complete teacher preparation program. After some deliberation, the subcommittee recommended to COATS that the universities should continue to be responsible for the core teacher preparation program, including the practicum, and that colleges should continue to offer first or second year courses in affiliation with the universities.

Secondly, it was suggested that if the Private Colleges Accreditation Board were to consider granting private colleges the authority to offer a professional degree in education that the Council should have the opportunity, to comment on the proposal before such authority is granted.

The Council agreed with the position of the subcommittee and forwarded its recommendation along with a rationale for its decision to the Minister. No further requests for comments have been made to COATS from the Minister, on this issue.

2. Teacher Preparation and the Continuing Need for the early Childhood Services Diploma

In January of 1988 the Teacher Preparation Subcommittee of COATS met to discuss the paper, "Teacher Training in Child Development Theory", which was a discussion paper prepared by the Planning and Policy Secretariat of Alberta Education. This meeting was

in response to a request of the Council to review the matter of teacher preparation in relation to the continuing need or lack of need for the early Childhood Services Diploma. The Subcommittee of the Council felt that it would need further information from the Universities regarding course offering in the area of human development theory. It also felt that it should examine the work of Alberta Education in the area of student learning styles. This work continued through June 1988. At that time the Subcommittee reported to the Council that it had not yet completed its research. The Council requested that the subcommittee continue its work in the fall and report its findings at the earliest possible meeting date.

3. Teacher Preparation, A Conceptual Framework

The Council circulated an initial draft of a discussion paper to the major stakeholder groups in January of 1987. This paper outlined current regulation, policy and practice for teacher preparation in Alberta and a series of statements of principle for discussion. Responses were made orally and/or in writing to the Council by the Alberta Teachers' Association, the Alberta School Trustees Association, the Conference of Alberta School Superintendents, and the Deans of the Faculties of Education at the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta, the University of Lethbridge and Faculty Saint-Jean. Responses were then compiled for review. In examining responses, the Council felt that a more conceptually precise outline of a proposed teacher preparation program would provide the basis for further discussion. The Teacher Preparation Subcommittee of COATS was requested by the Council to draft such an outline.

The first draft of a "conceptual framework for teacher education" discussion paper was reviewed by the Subcommittee in April of 1988. The Subcommittee felt that while the first draft of the paper did identify significant elements of a teacher education conceptual framework, the paper needed to be more comprehensive. As a result, a second draft was prepared for review by the Subcommittee. At the same time that this second draft of a conceptual framework paper for teacher preparation was presented, it became known that another advisory committee, the Advisor Committee on Teacher Education (ACOTF),

would be presenting its findings on an internship proposal to the Minister shortly. At the June 1988 meeting of COATS it was decided that the Council would seek further direction from the Minister regarding its mandate in this area before proceeding with this topic. Therefore, draft two of the conceptual framework paper was tabled until the fall of 1988.

Teacher Evaluation

The Council initially studied the area of teacher evaluation in relation to other topics such as teacher preparation and certification, recognition of teacher excellence and practice review. However, late in 1987 the Council established a subcommittee to address the issue of teacher evaluation directly.

The "Evaluation of Teacher Practice Subcommittee" felt that it required more information about existing practices at the local level with respect to teacher evaluation. The Subcommittee proposed that a survey of board chairpersons, superintendents, principals and practicing teachers in regard to teacher evaluation practice and outcomes be undertaken. However, it was immediate determined that some of the questions proposed to be answered b this study were already answered in a study by John Buroer entitled "Teacher Evaluation Policy Implementation".

The Subcommittee also reviewed a discussion paper prepared by the Teacher Certification and Development Branch staff entitled, "Teacher Evaluation Practices and Outcomes Utilization". This paper suggested a number of outcomes of a teacher effectiveness/competency, systems model.

As a result of the examination of these two papers, the Council considered the development of a monograph outlining for discussion a statement of purpose for teacher evaluation, criteria for evaluating teachers, implementation procedures for use by local jurisdictions and follow-up activities which could be undertaken by local jurisdictions.

The Subcommittee reported to the Council in June 1988 and presented its proposals for future activity by the Council in this area. The Council decided that it would defer further activity on this topic until after its mandate in this area was clarified.

Anticipated council On Alberta Teaching Standards Activity - August 1988 - June 1989

Practice Review

The Council expects that practice review cases will increase in number during 1988-89 as awareness of the process increases. It also expects that as a result of such cases, further refinement of the practice review procedures may be required.

An orientation session is planned for teachers and members of the public nominated to lists of potential members for practice review panels and committees.

Members of the Council expect to participate in and/or conduct presentations for interested parties on the nature and function of the Council on Alberta Teaching Standards and on the Practice Review of Teachers Regulation whenever such presentations are requested.

Teacher Excellence

The Council is hopeful that the Minister will approve the implementation of the "Excellence in Teaching Awards Program" during the 1988-89 academic year. If this program is approved for implementation, a nomination review committee must be established with representation from all major stakeholder groups. In addition nomination, screening and selection procedures will be reviewed and refined. Further, an advertising package must be developed and the nomination forms enhanced for public circulation.

Teacher Preparation and Teacher Evaluation

Both the Teacher Preparation Subcommittee and the Evaluation of Teacher Practice Subcommittee have work that is yet to be completed. Further activity by these subcommittees is expected to continue during 1988-1989 when information from Other research currently being conducted becomes available for inclusion in the work undertaken by COATS.